

puerto rico libre!

bulletin of the puerto rican solidarity committee

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOUNDS SOLIDARITY ORGANIZATION

The Founding Conference of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee (P.R.S.C.), held on March 1 and 2, 1975, unanimously adopted a political statement and by-laws, approved five national campaigns for 1975 and elected a 20-member National Board.

Calling the Conference "an historic occurrence in the history of the solidarity movement with Puerto Rican independence in the U.S.," Alfredo López, Executive Secretary of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Day Committee (P.R.S.D.C.), the organizational predecessor of the P.R.S.C., opened the Conference.

López' political report emphasized the importance of developing an organization like the P.R.S.C. right in the heart of imperialism, and urged the delegates to give careful consideration to the political statement, which, when approved, would become the political constitution of the P.R.S.C.

His speech was punctuated with loud applause, an affirmation of the delegates' desire to found the organization and get on with the day-to-day work of organizing the solidarity movement.

The Conference, which took place at the Newark, N.J. campus of Rutgers University, was attended by over 125 delegates and observers from all around the country. Most of the delegates were white North Americans; and at least 50% were women. The Conference noted the lack of participation of third world people, and a commitment was made by the whole

assembly to broaden the organization racially and nationally.

Frances Beal, Arthur Kinoy, Antonio Rodriguez and Irwin Silber, National Board members of the P.R.S.D.C., chaired the plenary sessions and participated in the Conference.

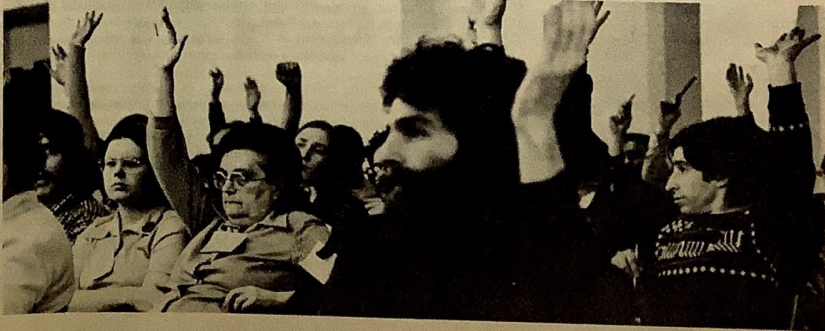
Among the Conference participants was Ruth Reynolds. Ms. Reynolds, who received a standing ovation when she was introduced, is the only North American to ever be jailed for supporting the Puerto Rican independence movement. She was imprisoned in Puerto Rico for several years following the Nationalist-Party-led insurrection in 1950.

Political Statement

According to the political statement adopted by the Conference, the "primary goal" around which the Committee will be organized is "support for the national liberation of Puerto Rico and the self-determination of the Puerto Rican people."

The statement, written by the Conference Convening Committee of the National Board in an attempt to give a context and focus to the work of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee, had been circulating among the various committees and supporters of the P.R.S.D.C. for several weeks prior to the Conference. After animated debate in workshops and recommended changes, it was unanimously approved by the full body on the first day of the Conference, and used as a basis for further discussions of by-laws and national campaigns.

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Puerto Rico Libre!

in solidarity

THE CONFERENCE IN NEWARK

It might seem an exaggeration to say that the Founding Conference of the Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee rivaled the National Day of Solidarity in importance.

The Garden action was a more dramatic event. But the fact remains that, at the Newark Conference, we met what is a fundamental historic need. We formed an organization of people living in the United States, whose principle of unity is support for the National Liberation of Puerto Rico. It is the first time in the history of our struggle that such a broad membership organization has been formed.

People from all over the country were present and, the fact that forces with such diverse political perspectives could obtain and maintain a unity around certain principles is, in itself, an achievement.

But the Conference was not satisfied with that achievement in itself. We learned in the very experience of the Conference, how to do certain crucial political things.

We learned to analyze and base our political and organizational projections on that analysis. All of the five projections for the year—the International Conference in Havana, support for the workers' movement, support for the struggle against repression and repressive activities, support for the freedom of Puerto Rican political prisoners, and support for the struggle against genocidal population policies—all of these come out of the analysis of the moment in which Puerto Rico—and Yanqui colonialism—live. They are projections which seek to make our support for the Puerto Rican struggle more concrete... most helpful. They are also based on where—at this moment—colonialism is weakest and where we can best contribute to its defeat.

The International Conference—an event which will concretize the growing international support for the national liberation struggle—comes at a time when making that support concrete is fundamental. Our Conference understood that, after we have concretized growing North American support, through the 27th campaign, we must take part in concretizing the international support.

This all comes out of the analysis which was made of imperialism's international situation in the discussion document. Nobody at the Conference doubted that an international conference is totally possible—that the world is objectively anti-imperialist.

Just as important, of course, are the organizing projections of the Conference. This is not "a staff of people with a yearly action" as New York coordinator Julie Nicham pointed out in her remarks. Ours is a membership organization, with bases, leadership, political perspective; with by-laws and scientifically arrived-at work plans.

In this light the goal of duplicating committee chapters, financial self-sufficiency of our organization and development of a consolidated national leadership through the National Board, are answers to basic needs.

Of course, the development of *Puerto Rico Libre!*, as an educational and organizing tool for our committee must be seen as a major priority of the year's work.

We could not write this column without mentioning the newly-elected National Board. Represented on the board are people from just about every area of the country, every tendency of political thinking and every sector of the population. But the representation is not merely reflective. This is representation in quality, life experience... these are leaders of wide sectors of the population, leaders in the real anti-imperialist movement.

It should be noted that a large number of Afro-American brothers and sisters have been elected to the board, which is a continuation—and a deepening—of one of the most important projections of the campaign which built the Garden action, the development of black solidarity with Puerto Rican independence.

Differences were expressed, discussion heated, but on approval of the basic questions—consensus was finally achieved. Our organization has been strengthened greatly by this Conference: it has learned how, in this moment when unity is crucial, unity is achieved.

REPRESSION ESCALATES IN PUERTO RICO

Just before Christmas, the Puerto Rican Solidarity Day Committee sent a letter to its supporters and organizers warning of a "new stage of repression" in Puerto Rico, following the recent strike against the government-owned Waterworks and Sewage Authority (A.A.A.).

What was so significant about this strike? Two things in particular: the forging of solidarity in concrete action of over 100 labor unions, united behind a militant labor leadership, and the strengthening of ties between this movement and independence forces. An increasingly desperate colonial government had only one basic response: escalating repression culminating in the mobilization of the National Guard to break the strike. (See *Puerto Rico Libre!* Vol. 2, No. 6.)

This was the second time that Hernandez Colon had called out the National Guard to break an island-wide strike, but only the third time the National Guard has been mobilized in the history of Puerto Rico since the Nationalist insurrection of 1950. And in the aftermath of the A.A.A. strike, another incident occurred which had not been seen in Puerto Rico since the '50's: the direct intervention of the F.B.I. in the arrest of Puerto Rican Socialist Party militant Delfin Ramos on December 14.

Ramos, originally held on \$100,000 bail, was later released on a lowered bail. He faces trial for possession of explosives, which the F.B.I. "found" while he and his family were out, even though Ramos' house had been searched by Puerto Rican police a week earlier who came away empty-handed. But the repression does not stop at Ramos.

Our letter stated that "for the Puerto Rican labor and independence movements, repression is now a fact of daily life and any action taken by the progressive movement will most certainly be followed by an action of repression." This holds true in Puerto Rico today.

Constant Surveillance of Militants

Early on the morning of December 31, bombs exploded in two Puerto Rican branches of the Chase Manhattan Bank and in a part of the Exxon pipeline system that brings fuel from the southern coast to San Juan. Nelson Rockefeller and Henry Kissinger were in Puerto Rico on vacation.

That same day several agents posted themselves in front of the offices of the pro-independence daily *Claridad*, calling people who entered and left the building by their nicknames. The houses of Juan Mari Brás, Secretary General of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, and over a dozen other national leaders were watched by "a great number" of agents, both F.B.I. and Puerto Rican people, according to reports.

Across the island agents carrying rifles surrounded the P.S.P. zone office at Mayaguez. Independentista Humberto Pagan was reportedly attacked by agents in Aguadilla.

On New Year's Eve, in Vega Alta, agents mounted a spotlight on the home of President of the P.S.P. Committee in the area while three police cars circled his house. In nearby Las Parcelas agents posted notices on the doors of P.S.P. members' homes stating that Party members lived there. Almost all the leadership of the P.S.P. in the Ponce area had their homes closely watched by agents under the orders of an emergency alert given by the Superintendent of Police.

Union Offices Bombed

On January 3, 1975, the offices of the Boilemakers' Union were wrecked by a bomb which exploded on the second floor of the Santa Barbara office building, damaging as well the head-

quarters of the National Workers' Union (U.N.T.) and the Independent Automobile Accidents Compensation Authority Union (A.C.A.A.).

The Secretary-Treasurer of the Boilemakers' Union is socialist labor leader Pedro Grant, who also heads the United Workers Movement (M.O.U.)—an organization of 50 unions which has been the center of coordination of the strike movement in Puerto Rico over the last few years. The U.N.T. is a militant independentista labor union.

According to Arturo Grant, President of the U.N.T., "thirty or forty" agents of the Criminal Investigating Corps (I.C.I.), the agency in charge of "national" political investigation in Puerto Rico, remained for an extended period in the building supposedly making a preliminary investigation.

The next night Pedro and Arturo Grant, driving home from their union local, were chased by four cars with special license plates carrying undercover agents with rifles, who tried to force them off the road. The two socialist labor leaders had to seek refuge in Río Piedras for several hours before they were able to return home in peace.

Militant Beaten, Repression Continues

On the same day, January 4, a sympathizer of the P.S.P. was forced at gunpoint into an incinerator room of her apartment building where she was asked questions about the whereabouts of P.S.P. leaders Florencio Merced, Jenaro Renias and militant Papo Torres of Ponce. She was finally beaten into unconsciousness.

On January 7, a Brigade of Civil Defense in Ponce, an organization formed supposedly for the purpose of helping the public in cases of emergency, spent the morning tearing down P.S.P. posters and leaflets in the area. That same day the Secretary of Information and Propaganda of the P.S.P. denounced in *Claridad* the "tight scrutiny" to which party members were being submitted by police agents. He claimed the

Luis Angel Charbonnet lies wounded in the wake of bombing of independentista restaurant in Mayaguez. He later died.



Puerto Rico Libre! is published monthly by the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee, an organization which supports the national liberation struggle of Puerto Rico and self-determination for Puerto Rican people. National Board of the P.R.S.C.: Eta J. Baker, Amiri Baraka, Frances Beale, Clyde Bellecourt, Ben Chavis, Walter Collins, David Dellinger, Rev. David Garcia, Corky Gonzalez, Jim Haskins, Pat Henschke, Arthur Kinoy, Yari Kochiyama, Beverly Leman, Antonio Rodriguez, Orono Sadaoka, Irwin Silber, Annie Stein, Jose "Che" Velazquez.

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STOP SPRINGBOARD!

Each year about this time, the United States government sponsors a massive military exercise in and around the waters of Puerto Rico called "Operation Springboard". The exercise involving units from all branches of the U.S. military as well as from some of the different NATO countries, has traditionally been a routine affair. This year however, "Operation Springboard" will be met with a counter-operation: an educational and organizing campaign called "Springboard to What?"

The G.I. movement which grew out of the anti-war and anti-racist struggles among U.S. enlisted people in the late '60s has developed as an openly anti-imperialist movement in the '70s, organizing among the enlisted ranks around U.S. foreign policy, domestic repression against labor and Third World peoples, as well as other key issues.

In the Southeastern U.S., the G.I. Movement is represented by the Defense Committee of Tidewater, Va., Jackson, N.C., and Charleston S.C.; the Fort Bragg G.I. Union; and the Black Military Resistance League. These groups have organized the anti-"Springboard" campaign.

"Springboard" is a readiness training exercise. This year the combined forces of 20 U.S. Navy ships from Norfolk, Charleston and Mayport, Florida, 10 British vessels, 3 U.S. submarines and 50-75 U.S. and Dutch Airforce planes, along with units of Marines from Camp Lejeune, N.C. are spending the last week in January and the months of February and March practicing such arts of modern warfare as anti-submarine and anti-air warfare, spotting for gunfire support, fire control, and on-land gun shoots. Recent reports indicate that the aircraft carrier the USS Independence will be included in the maneuvers.

The U.S. East coast forces participating in "Springboard" make up 10% of the total U.S. military strength. Combined with U.S. forces already stationed in the Caribbean, they have been in the past and could in the future be used against armed uprisings in the Dominican Republic, Panama, Guatemala, Cuba, Chile, and Puerto Rico.

Military installations in Puerto Rico occupy over 13% of the island's best farmland. This includes the U.S. Naval Station at San Juan, Fort Buchanan, Fort Allen, Sabana Seca, the West Annex, the U.S. Army Reserves, the 8,000-member Puerto Rican National Guard, and the giant naval complex at Roosevelt Roads.

"Rosey Roads" is one of the largest military installations in the world, covering 37,000 acres of land with a value conservatively estimated at \$300 million. This base and the allied facilities of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Range (Culebra, Vieques, etc.) is one of the most complete training and testing areas in the world. Several major commands are located there which plan and implement cruises to Africa, South America, and the

entire Caribbean area, forcing Puerto Rico into the role of an important base for U.S. imperialism overseas.

"Springboard" holds nothing good in store for rank-and-file G.I.'s. Each year enlisted people are forced to work long, back-breaking hours with machinery that is pushed far past its capacity for safe operation. The combination of fatigue and poor safety conditions results in injuries and even deaths.

Recurrent against these oppressive conditions combined with a basic distrust of the political motivations for U.S. foreign policy are making more and more G.I.'s look for a political explanation for the purposes of "Springboard". "Springboard to What?" is intended to offer just such an explanation.

The Defense Committee, Ft. Bragg G.I. Union, and the Black Military Resistance League are circulating a petition to "Stop Springboard". Addressed to the Congress of the United States, it reads in part:

"We the undersigned active-duty men and women, military families, and private citizens are opposed to the military training exercise called 'Operation Springboard'. 'Operation Springboard' is part of our training in providing fire support for suppressing rebellions in countries like Puerto Rico. . . . The struggle of the Puerto Rican people to take control of their own country is just like the struggle of enlisted people or U.S. civilian workers to take control over their own lives. As working people ourselves, we support the struggle of the people of Puerto Rico for their independence, and call on you to take whatever actions are necessary to STOP OPERATION SPRINGBOARD!"

The petition campaign is being accompanied by distribution of 7,000 16-page pamphlets on the history of Puerto Rico, the colonial plans for the "Superport", the independence movement on the island, and the political significance of "Operation Springboard."

Meetings are being set up among G.I.'s to discuss the campaign, and to present the slide-show "A Superport Means No More Puerto Rico", made available by the Puerto Rican Solidarity Day Committee.

On January 25, members of the Committees, the G.I. Union, and the League sponsored a rally in Norfolk, Virginia calling for self-determination for Puerto Rico and an end to "Operation Springboard."

"Springboard to What?" promises to be the most massive educational and organizing campaign yet carried out among U.S. Servicemen in support of self-determination for the Puerto Rican people, and is a reflection of the growing anti-imperialist sentiment among North American G.I.'s. Anyone wishing to help in the campaign can get in touch with The Defense Committee, Box 9870, Norfolk, Virginia 23505.

PRSDC MEMBERS VISIT PUERTO RICO

In mid-January, six members of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee were the guests of the Central Committee of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party during a 2-week visit to Puerto Rico. This was the first visit of North Americans to the island officially organized by the P.S.P. The group, composed of individuals who did outstanding work during the campaign to mobilize for the October 27, 1974 rally at Madison Square Garden, included Roger Geller from Boston, Frank Christopher from Los Angeles, Dana Biberman, Rosa Borenstein and Julie Nichamin from New York and Ted Glick from Washington, D.C.

The group traveled throughout the island, making special stops at the petrochemical complexes in the Ponce area; the U.S. marine base, Camp García, on Vieques, an island off the east coast of Puerto Rico; Afiasco, the newly-proposed west-coast site for the superport; and the mountainous mining region where Kennecott Copper and American Metal Climax are trying to lay stakes near the cities of Lures and Jayuya, historic landmarks in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence.

Wherever the group went they visited with representatives of the independence movement, learned about the movement's history and saw how the people are organizing themselves for the recovery of their national sovereignty. From the very successful 10-year old movement to stop the exploitation of copper and other mineral resources in the mining area, to students organizing at the island's only technical university in Mayaguez, to a visit with Antonio Cruz Colon, an *independista* who spent 22 years in prison for his participation in the Nationalist-led uprising in Jayuya on October 30, 1950, the group was constantly impressed by how deeply and firmly the independence movement is supported by the majority of Puerto Ricans, and how visible it is.

As one member of the group, Frank Christopher, said: "The independence movement is inescapable. Everywhere, every day, the commercial press, radio and TV quote leaders of the independence movement and follow their actions and the movement's closely. Building walls, highway embankments, all public places are plastered with movement posters and murals. A well-organized government couldn't do a better job in advertising its programs and campaigns."

Before the group left for Puerto Rico, *Puerto Rico Libre!* editors asked each person to answer five questions while they were on the trip. The questions and excerpted responses follow.

What was the purpose of your trip?

JULIE NICHAMIN: We visited Puerto Rico to try to get a firsthand understanding of the conditions on the island. It is one thing to read about a country, and another to see it with your own eyes. We wanted to be able to gain a more profound vision of the problems of the colonial economy: irrational production, unemployment, inflation, wanton pollution of the environment, and the effects of a sustained cultural aggression directed at the Puerto Rican people and culture by U.S. imperialism. And we wanted to do this by visiting the necessary places—the petrochemical industry sites, the mining zone, the proposed site for the superport, sites of U.S. military bases—and by talking to the people themselves.

What were some of your impressions of Puerto Rico?

DANA BIBERMAN: In many ways Puerto Rico is an exaggerated microcosm of the U.S. The gulf between rich and poor is much wider; the destruction of natural resources by chaotic

industrialization is much more prevalent; the effects of consumerism are more blatant when seen in a poor, undeveloped country.

ROGER GELLER: It is extremely difficult to single out one aspect or area of the trip as having made the greatest impression on me. It was clear that the effects of U.S. imperialism pervade the entire fabric of the economic and social structure of Puerto Rico. The capital-intensive economy and its resulting phenomenally high unemployment rate was one of the most constant and most obvious reminders of imperialism. The destructive effects of this economic exploitation on the environment, especially in the area of the petrochemical complex in Ponce, and on the society, in terms of thousands of people, deeply in debt with no prospects of work, in impoverished condition, while land speculators and U.S. businessmen take advantage of tax incentives and loopholes and rake in the dollars cannot be adequately described. . . .

Underlying this desperate economic condition, there was also the impression of a growing understanding of the need for change, fundamental societal change, among the Puerto Rican people. Through all of the workers we spoke to, through the wall paintings and political events we witnessed, there was ample evidence of a growing class consciousness and awareness of the need for independence.

What were your impressions of the Puerto Rican independence movement?

ROGER GELLER: The independence movement visibly demonstrates its historical and mass base on a very wide scale. . . . The Puerto Rican people themselves seemed to applaud the independence movement. This was most obvious riding on the buses from San Juan to Mayaguez [Jan. 11 rally] where people on the roadside demonstrated their support and appreciation for those going to the rally for independence. Whenever we identified ourselves, North Americans who support the movement for independence, we were warmly welcomed. . . . The fishermen in Cabo Rojo, the united front against exploitation of the mine zone, the community people who attended the San Juan funeral of a victim of the Mayaguez bombing, all contributed to the clear impression that independence is not simply the desire of a few political militants but rather a broad-based sentiment of the masses of the Puerto Rican people.

DANA BIBERMAN: . . . Puerto Rico has a very long history of independence struggle; this nationalism and *independista* sentiment runs deep in most of the people. This depth of sentiment, along with the rapidly strengthening organized liberation forces, place the independence movement, as a whole, well in the forefront of Puerto Rican society. There is a tremendous sense that the independence forces are actually contending for power.

What was the most important thing you learned from your visit?
TED GLICK: I was very impressed by the independence organizations, especially the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. The way in which strong, disciplined, honest, democratic, non-sectarian-based organization can make all the difference in the world between a lost opportunity and a major stride forward in the advance towards socialist revolution really impressed me.

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ROSA BORENSTEIN: The most important thing that I learned, or rather had reinforced for me, was that the Puerto Rican nation will not allow itself to be destroyed by the aggressive actions of U.S. imperialism. This was most vivid on the evening of January 11. That night, just before the annual rally commemorating the birth of Eugenio María de Hostos, a turn-of-the-century Puerto Rican leader, and the founding of the Movimiento Pro-Independencia (M.P.I., forerunner of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party), a bomb went off in a local Mayaguez restaurant, killing several people and wounding many others. Instead of frightening away the people, 7,000 strong, who had come to the rally, the bombing seemed to have made the *independistas* more determined to continue with their activity. The rally went on. The leaders of the P.S.P. spoke in the open town square, easy targets for any provocation. The fearlessness and determination of the people and their leaders showed me that the independence struggle is not an intellectual notion, but a real force that is expressed in the actions and character of thousands of Puerto Ricans.

ROGER GELLER: The most important lesson of the trip was that the movement for independence is very real and very important to the survival of Puerto Rico. The solidarity movement in the U.S. is now more than an abstract expression of anti-imperialist politics; it is an alliance with the life and death struggle of the people of Puerto Rico.

How would you apply what you learned in Puerto Rico to the development of the solidarity movement in the U.S.?

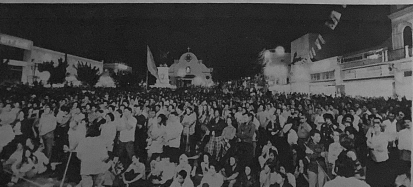
ROGER GELLER: To apply this understanding—how vital the independence movement is to the survival of the Puerto Rican people—to the work of local solidarity committees requires an understanding of the primary needs of the Puerto Rican people, an understanding of the day-to-day oppression of U.S. imperialism. This is translated into material support for the Puerto Rican labor movement with concrete support work which the workers themselves feel is necessary; it includes an understanding of the methods of repression used against Puerto Rican militants and the political and material support we can give to combat it; it demands the appreciation of the different levels of the political struggle, contacts with the different independence forces, and support for all of those sectors. It means practical work with direct contact as a true meaning of solidarity.

TED GLICK: For one thing, I can speak much more concretely about what I saw and not just from an intellectual perspective. I can relate the things I learned about Puerto Rico to the United States reality and help to build more of an understanding of the need for mutual support among the two peoples. I can use my slides to make Puerto Rico something more than a speech. I can more honestly and clearly speak about what is happening to the people down there, talking about specific examples of individual people we met. Basically, I can convey much more of a sense of the importance and urgency of that struggle and why my people should support it because... I was touched by... the lives of the many people I met.

ROSA BORENSTEIN: I believe that the Puerto Rican people have given us a great example for how we can build a solidarity movement. Like the Puerto Rican movement for independence, we must incorporate people from all sectors of the society into support for the struggle. The people that we met constantly stressed to us that the success of the independence movement in Puerto Rico has been predicated on the ability of the various forces and organizations of the movement to unify their front against imperialism. Although it would be misleading to state that the Puerto Rican independence movement is entirely united, we could clearly see how the degree of unification that exists has strengthened the movement. For instance, several unions have joined together into a new federation called the United Workers Movement, the M.O.U. The M.O.U. not only struggles to better the immediate conditions of workers, but calls for independence from U.S. imperialism, as a key factor in the long-range betterment of the Puerto Rican working class. This new organization has its allies in the people's organizations that have sprung up to protest the support and mining projects. They reinforce one another's specific struggles, and the general struggle for independence.

Many different people, from many different sectors of the population can be drawn into supporting Puerto Rican independence in the U.S. as well, whether these people are outraged at the ecological damage done by the U.S. colonialists or the genocidal population plans, their support for independence will both broaden and make more effective the solidarity movement here.

Thousands rally in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico on January 11, 1975.



Sterilizations in Puerto Rican communities of New York have increased 180% between 1972 and 1973, and are taking place without benefit of procedural guidelines, a source close to the city's hospitals here has charged.

According to our source, Morrisania Hospital had an increase of 268% and Lincoln Hospital 168%. Both are in the Bronx and serve predominantly Puerto Rican communities.

In Puerto Rico sterilization has since the 1930's, according to government documents exposed by the independence movement, become a tool of the colonial administration for dealing with rising unemployment: 35% of women of child-bearing age in Puerto Rico are sterilized.



G.I. resistance has surfaced on U.S. Navy ships in Puerto Rico which are participating in Operation Springboard (see P. 3), according to the G.I. organization, the Defense Committee, located in Charleston, S.C.

A sidown strike was carried out in mid-February by two fire technicians (F.T.s) aboard a Charleston-based destroyer when the weapon fire the men were directing killed a cow on the island of Vieques. Only when the captain promised that he would no longer ignore the presence of livestock, which the men knew to be valuable to Puerto Rican families, did the two F.T.s return to work.

On another destroyer, sailors denounced the attitude of their captain who

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steamed directly over a fishing net despite repeated warnings of the navigator.

The ships have been the site of political action against Operation Springboard and in support of independence for Puerto Rico mounted by G.I. support groups in the eastern U.S.

A resolution which "recognizes the right of the people of Puerto Rico, today under colonial domination, to preserve in any form their natural resources" was passed by the Conference of Developing Countries on Raw Materials held in Dakar, Senegal, February 3-8.

The resolution also gives full support to "the just struggle of the Puerto Rican people for their independence" and demands that "the government of the U.S. halt current projects and not initiate further projects which exploit the natural resources... of Puerto Rico."

The Raw Materials Conference, the first of its kind in the world, was organized and attended by the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations. Representing the Puerto Rican national liberation movement at the event were Pedro Baiges of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party and environmentalist Neltali García.

The Commonwealth Government may lay off as many as 20,000 Civil Service Workers because of "budgetary constraints," a U.S. Labor Department official inadvertently disclosed in January, according to sources in Puerto Rico.

Already, 2,256 public school teachers were laid off in January, along with hundreds of healthcare workers. The teachers' layoffs have affected 85,000 students mostly from secondary schools in small towns. Education Secretary Ramon Cruz has called upon out-of-work teachers and parents to volunteer to give classes, man school cafeterias, and provide other services for the public schools.

Hospitals all over the island are having serious problems due to lay-offs of health care workers. The University hospital has ended its Center for Maternal and Infant Care, and the obstetrics and gynecology Department exists with the minimum personnel established by the federal commission that accredits the hospital.

Hospitals in Caguas, Aguadilla, Ponce and medical centers in Mayaguez and Canaño are all cutting back on services

and sending people to other, already over-crowded, hospitals.

Carlos Gallisá, a leading pro-independence legislator, announced his decision to join the Puerto Rican Socialist Party on January 8, giving as his "primary concern" the development "of the struggle for independence and socialism in Puerto Rico."

Gallisá, who is also a labor lawyer currently representing the Puerto Rican Cement Workers' Union in litigation with the Puerto Rico Cement Company, introduced legislation on March 5 which would exempt unemployed workers from the obligation of repaying their debts.



Carlos Gallisá

A former personal aide to colonial Governor Hernandez Colon is negotiating a contract to mine Puerto Rican copper, nickel and other minerals directly with U.S. corporations Kennecott Copper and American Metal Climax (AMAX) a "reliable source" told the pro-independence Puerto Rican daily, *Claridad*.

The former aide, Hector López Jimarito, and Pedro Negrón Ramos, Natural Resources Secretary of the Commonwealth Government, are meeting in New York with the U.S. companies. The source mentioned that the terms so far negotiated are "extremely favorable" to the companies.

Meanwhile, 10,000 square kilometers of Puerto Rico's land and surrounding waters are currently under exploration for minerals and for reportedly large deposits of oil, particularly off the northern coast of Puerto Rico, by U.S. companies Kennecott Copper, AMAX, Panhandle Delaware, Universal Oil and Oceanic Exploration, according to *Claridad*.

UP TO DATE

The Operators and Cement Workers Union in Ponce continue their strike against the Puerto Rico Cement Company, of the multi-million-dollar Ferré Enterprises, owned by former governor and pro-statehood politician Luis Ferré. On March 3, Puerto Rico Cement postponed negotiations for an "indefinite period".

The strike began Feb. 1, after the company stated its determination in negotiations to "maintain the previous contract" without any concrete improvements, and excluding rights already won in the past year, according to union leader Efraín Fernández. He also maintains that the Company threatened to adopt standards that would result in the lay-off of 125 of the 480 workers currently employed.

Strikers have accused Puerto Rico Cement of trying to destroy the union since its inception, particularly persecuting the socialist leadership and workers who support socialism and independence in Puerto Rico. Since the strike began, the Company has reportedly hired Security Associates (a firm specializing in strike-breaking) to provoke violence, and has carried on a campaign against strikers in the newspaper *Nuevo Día*, which has one of the largest circulations in Puerto Rico, and is also owned by Ferré Enterprises.

Meanwhile over 70% of the strikers have daily attended picket lines, the labor movement has responded with wide spread support, and demonstrations have been organized.



Demonstration in support of strike against P.R. Cement

A significant development is the organization of a Support Committee by the wives of the striking workers, which the union leadership declares has "played a determining role in all the activities of the strike."

More than 1500 Puerto Ricans demanded that the Hartford Process should "not ever consider" plans to disperse the Boricua community in a picket in front of Hartford's Civic Center, in Connecticut, on January 21.

A confidential memorandum, written by members of the Greater Hartford Process, a planning agency financed by the large insurance companies, proposed that Bellevue Square, a predominantly Puerto Rican area, be demolished.

"This attack," said an organizer in the area, "follows the recent attempt to fence-in Puerto Rican and Black communities," proposed by Hartford Institute for Criminal Justice which alleges that the fences would make it easier to "combat crime."

Investigation by Puerto Rican groups in the area has shown that a City Councilman, Richard Sulisman and the Mayor Richard Blackstone both are members of the Board of directors of the corporate association, Hartford Process.

Carlos Gallis, a socialist legislator before the Puerto Rican House of Representatives, has introduced a bill condemning proposals made by the Greater Hartford Process, charging that they are "a racist insult aimed against Puerto Ricans in that city and the whole Puerto Rican nation."

The F.B.I. maintains 160 agents in Puerto Rico to persecute the independence movement, according to Gloria Teresa Caldas Blanco at a news conference in San Juan on December 16. Caldas Blanco worked as a secretary for the F.B.I. from July 1969 until the end of 1971. She is now a member of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

Caldas Blanco revealed methods employed by the F.B.I. such as infiltration of independence organizations, "illegal mail tampering, gathering bank records and illegal surveillance of independence leaders, particularly Juan Mari Brás of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (P.R.S.P.) and Rubén Berríos of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (P.R.P.), both of whom are reportedly maintained on 24-hour watch even when they are out of the country.

Mari Brás, who also spoke at the news conference, said that sworn statements by Caldas Blanco would be submitted to the United Nations and other international

bodies. The P.S.P. also pledged to defend the former secretary, who has been threatened with a \$10,000 fine and several years in prison, from any attempts to victimize her for revealing F.B.I. activities.

Gloria Teresa Caldas Blanco



Over 50 people from the East Coast and Puerto Rico participated in a joint conference of the National Lawyers Guild and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party on Feb. 8 in New York City. The objectives of the conference were to define perspectives for and areas of anti-colonial legal work, and to establish a working relationship between the participants.

The conference was divided into four workshops dealing with repression, military occupation, the sterilization campaign against Puerto Rican women, and labor. Each workshop outlined programs of work all within the context of affirming the sovereignty of the Puerto Rican people and opposing all forms of U.S. colonial domination over Puerto Rico.

Some examples of workshop proposals were to begin litigation for the release of the Puerto Rican Nationalist political prisoners; to organize and hold a seminar on the Agricultural Workers Association; to immediately file a Freedom of Information Act request on the use of the "time-capsule" birth control device, Depo-Provera, in U.S. drug companies' experiments in Puerto Rico; and demanding an Environmental Impact statement from the United States government in regard to the use of Puerto Rican islands for Navy target practice and the use of the Puerto Rican national territory by the military in general. For further information contact Rick Wagner of the Center for Constitutional Rights, 853 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Conference, cont'd from P. 1

The last section of the statement, which deals particularly with the founding of the P.R.S.C., points out that "the development of a mass movement around Puerto Rico... depends on our ability to link up the struggle of the Puerto Rican people with... present and long-term interests of many sectors of the American population..."

To do this, the document goes on to state, "the issue itself must be integrally tied to the day-to-day reality of people in this country. Every opportunity must be taken to expose the rhetoric of the U.S. government about Puerto Rico and show how the government's strategy in Puerto Rico also affects North Americans, by constantly demonizing that both people have the same enemy: U.S. imperialism. People can and will understand that the Puerto Rican struggle will profoundly affect objective and subjective conditions in this country, and that the liberation of Puerto Rico will signify a tremendous step on the road to basic social and economic change in this country."

The document proposes that within the broad movement of solidarity with Puerto Rican independence, there must be an organization capable of giving leadership to all the forces involved by providing an anti-imperialist analysis of Puerto Rico's relationship to the U.S. and developing a strategy which can effectively mobilize and sustain the larger movement. This organization must be founded on the understanding that the imperialist strategy in Puerto Rico is not a "policy error," an "oversight,"... but... an inherent function of the system of "imperialism." This means that we will not be satisfied with Congressional reforms, politicians' promises, or imperialist "solutions!"

National Campaigns

P.R.S.D.C. board member Antonio Rodríguez, a Mexican leader of the Los Tres Defense Committee in Los Angeles and C.A.S.A. (Centro Americano de Acción Social), prefaced the presentation of the five 1975 national campaigns with a moving declaration of solidarity between the Mexican and Chicano peoples and the Puerto Rican people.

The five national campaigns proposed by the Conference Convening Committee were presented to the body by Roy Borenstein of the Central Staff of the P.R.S.D.C. Each campaign was discussed in a separate workshop and reports recommending additions and changes were presented to the closing plenary session, which adopted the campaigns. The plenary mandated the newly-elected National Board to develop national work plans for their implementation.

The campaigns adopted in final form by the Conference are the participation of the P.R.S.C. in the "International Conference in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence," which will be held in Cuba during the fall, support for the workers' movement in Puerto Rico as well as particular struggles of Puerto Rican workers in the U.S., like those of migrants, which are clearly linked to the strategy of imperialism; against the political repression by U.S. government agencies of the Puerto Rican independence movement and the Puerto Rican people in general; in support of the unconditional freedom of the "Five Puerto Rican Political Prisoners," arrested during the 1950's and currently the longest-held political prisoners in the western hemisphere, and other Puerto Rican political prisoners like Carlos Feliciano; and against the genocidal population policies used by the U.S. against the Puerto Rican people.

Local committees which have already initiated work on some

of the campaigns, such as support for workers' struggles, anti-repression, and sterilization, will continue that work and adapt it to the national guidelines.

Some of the concrete ideas put forth by the Conference body for the implementation of the campaigns include setting up an *ad hoc* committee which will select and organize a representative delegation from the United States to the International Solidarity Conference; the production of literature about the intervention of U.S. repressive agencies in Puerto Rico, the histories of the Five Political Prisoners, documentation on sterilization and other genocidal programs used against the Puerto Rican people; and speaking tours for leaders of the Puerto Rican workers' movement and women's movement.

A motion from the floor called for the P.R.S.C. to develop a national project that would relate the colonial case of Puerto Rico to the 1976 bicentennial campaign being run by our government, which was unanimously accepted, and was recommended to the National Board for study and implementation plans.

Organizational Objectives

In his closing remarks, Alfredo López listed four organizational objectives for the P.R.S.C. in the coming year. They are the "consolidation of the National Board into an active and collective leadership of the solidarity committees," the doubling of both the membership and number of committees of the organization by March, 1976 (in the by-laws adopted by the P.R.S.C., membership is open to individuals only, there is no organizational membership); that local committees and National Board members make the bulletin, *Puerto Rico Libre!* "the educational and organizational tool" of the P.R.S.C.; and that the committee make itself financially self-sufficient. These objectives were unanimously approved.

National Board

The new at-large members of the National Board elected at the Conference are: Ella J. Baker, civil rights activist; Amiri Baraka, Chairman, Congress of African Peoples; Frances Bell, Third World Women's Alliance; Clyde Bellecourt, American Indian Movement; Ben Chavis, Vice-Chairperson of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression; Walter Collins, Southern Conference Educational Fund; Dave Dellinger, war activist; Rev. David Garcia, Priest-in-Charge, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, N.Y.C.; Corky Gonzales, Crusade for Justice; Jim Houghton, Fight Back!; Phil Hutchings, black activist; Arthur Kinoy, Interim Committee for a Mass Party of the People; Yuri Kochiyama, Asian-American activist; Beverly Leman, women's movement and anti-war activist; Antonio Rodríguez, C.A.S.A.; Onusada Sadaqui, African Liberation Support Committee; Irwin Silber, *Guardian* editor; Annie Stein, People Against Racism in Education; and Jose "Che" Velazquez, member of the Central Committee of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. Each local committee coordinator is also a member of the National Board. The stated hope of the P.R.S.C. is that, with the development of many new committees, the coordinators represented on the Board will outnumber the at-large members.

The Conference, united and determined to meet its 1975 goals, ended in the early evening of Sunday, March 2 amid jubilant cries of "Que Viva Puerto Rico Libre!" and "Independence for Puerto Rico Now!"

(*Puerto Rico Libre!* will be publishing news of the various national campaigns in its coming issue, as well as information about membership and new committees. If you would like, you may write directly to the P.R.S.C. national office for more information.)

Repression, cont'd from P. 3

surveillance was interrupting the mobilization for the demonstration planned by the P.S.P. for January 11, in Mayaguez in commemoration of the 16th anniversary of the founding of the Pro-Independence Movement (M.P.I.) and the birth of the patriot Eugenio María de Hostos.

Bomb at Mayaguez

"I'll never forget the drive to the demonstration, recalls Rosa Borenstein, P.R.S.D.C. Central Staff member who was visiting Puerto Rico at that time. "We heard the news on the car radio that a bomb had gone off in an *independista* restaurant only a block away from the plaza where the demonstration was to be held. I felt a moment of pure, cold fear."

"But the spirit at Mayaguez was tremendous. Seven thousand people stood for more than three hours listening attentively to the speeches of Pedro Grant, socialist legislator Carlos Gallisa, and to Juan Mari Bras' state of the union address."

Two young workers were killed in the blast and 11 were wounded. Three days later, the funeral for Luis Angel Charbonier, a P.S.P. affiliate killed in the blast, was held.

"The funeral procession wound its way around Luis Angel's neighborhood," said Rosa Borenstein. "It was more a defiant demonstration against repression than a funeral."

In a meeting against repression held at the Bar Association of Puerto Rico on January 23, Juan Mari Bras announced that a Cuban exile named Sergio A. Ramos Suarez, an employee of the Board of Planning who coordinates a group of terrorist cells in Puerto Rico called "Abdala" directed by the C.I.A., was one of those responsible for the Mayaguez bombing. He also implicated Freddy Valentin of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (P.N.P.), whom he said was the liaison between Abdala and the terrorist wing of the P.N.P. youth. The latest reports are that Freddy Valentin is suing Mari Bras for slander, a case which, if it goes to court, puts the onus on Valentin to prove he was in no way involved in terrorist activities.

Bomb at Fraunces Tavern

On January 24 at about 1:30 p.m., a bomb exploded in Fraunces Tavern, a restaurant in downtown Manhattan, killing four people and wounding 20. A message in a nearby phone booth claimed that the bombing was carried out by the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueña (F.A.L.N.).

The slander against the independence movement and repres-

sion that has followed the Fraunces Tavern bombing has been serious. F.B.I. agents have been making their rounds among militants of the independence struggle who are organizing in the United States. Leaders of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party have been followed, the P.S.P. offices watched. The wife of political prisoner Carlos Feliciano has been visited several times by F.B.I. agents in New York. The families of political prisoners Rafael Cancel Miranda, Oscar Collazo, Andres Figueroa Corderon, Irvin Flores, and Lolita Lebron have been questioned in Puerto Rico by F.B.I. agents.

Public Hearings Condemn C.I.A., F.B.I. Intervention

On February 11, Juan Mari Bras spoke before the Commission on Civil Rights at public hearings.

The Puerto Rican Socialist Party had been asking the C.D.C., a branch of the Commonwealth Government, since December 1974 to hold hearings investigating the illegal actions of the C.I.A., the F.B.I., and the Puerto Rican Police Department.

Speaking also before the C.D.C. were Dr. Jose Roman, Dr. Jose Milton Soltero and lawyer Ludmilla Rivera Burgos. Concrete evidence was brought forward against these agencies of negligence in investigating attacks against the independence movement, and complicity between these agencies and right-wing sectors.

It is clear that repression has intensified in Puerto Rico during the first months of 1975. And it has spread itself to the United States. Federal authorities are intervening in both areas—a sign of increasing U.S. Government concern about the growing militance of the labor movement and the growing strength of the movement for independence in Puerto Rico.

Although the U.S. Government is increasing its repressive force in relation to Puerto Rico, the anti-imperialist movement in the United States is applying its own pressure to expose and combat the U.S. Government's plans—actions like the National Lawyers' Guild Conference (see "Up to Date") and the work of the P.R.S.D.C. are key.

The P.S.P. and the Puerto Rican Independence Party (P.I.P.) have condemned the action, both agreeing that lives of working people were jeopardized unnecessarily. The Fraunces Tavern bombing was the first in the history of Puerto Rico, carried out by a group identifying itself with the independence struggle, that was set with the purpose of assassination and the potential for killing or wounding innocent bystanders. ●

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